



big brown bat

Eptesicus fuscus

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
Class: Mammalia
Order: Chiroptera
Family: Vespertilionidae

Features

The big brown bat has a large body (3 3/4 to five inches long, including up to a two-inch tail) and long forearms. It has a brown body and brown-black wings and ears. It has a broad, round tragus (membranous projection) in the ear.

Natural History

The big brown bat lives in attics, barns, caves, mines, bridges, and trees in the summer. In the winter, it can be found in caves, mines, attics, and buildings and often is found in urban areas associated with trees and buildings. It is the most widely distributed bat in Iowa. It eats insects and forages anywhere they are present. Mosquitoes can be an important food. People often see it since the big brown bat uses buildings and it may hunt in yards. Summer and winter sites are not more than a few miles away from each other. The big brown bat withstands cold better than other bats, so it can hibernate in more places. Mating occurs in the fall, winter, or spring. Those females mating in fall or winter store the sperm in the uterus until spring, when egg fertilization occurs. Females form maternity colonies after leaving the wintering site. Young are born in May and June. Two young are born per female. The young bat may attain adult size

in about two months, but it can fly about four weeks after birth.

Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; bottomland forests; interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; constructed lakes, ponds and reservoirs

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.